

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Thursday, May 1, 2025.

Josh Peters, currently serving as Jefferson County's Community Development Director, has been named the new County Administrator. Peters, who was selected from a competitive pool of 19 applicants across five states, brings extensive experience in public service. His deep knowledge of the region and strong leadership background – spanning roles with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources, and nearly two decades of planning and development experience – position him well to guide the County into its next chapter.

Community engagement was a key element of the final stage of the selection process, which included a well-attended public meeting on April 29 at the Jefferson County Library. The event gave residents the opportunity to meet the finalists and engage with them directly. Mark McCauley, who has served as County Administrator since 2021, expressed strong support for both the hiring process and the outcome. "This process reflects the County's ongoing commitment to openness and public involvement," McCauley said. "Josh is an excellent choice, and I am confident he will serve the people of Jefferson County with integrity, vision, and dedication." McCauley, who is retiring on June 30, will work with Peters over the next several weeks during the leadership transition to ensure continuity and maintain the momentum on key County initiatives.

"I'm honored to serve Jefferson County in this new role," says Peters. "I'm grateful for the trust placed in me and am eager to collaborate with County staff, elected officials, and the community to advance our shared goals." County Commissioner Greg Brotherton, who announced his candidacy for the appointment and recused himself from the selection process, told KPTZ last month that he was not planning to run for a third term.

On Sunday of this week, the Jefferson County Sheriff's office received information that a suspect vehicle was traveling into Jefferson County after fleeing from law enforcement in Kitsap County. The suspect had reportedly crossed the Hood Canal Bridge after evading a traffic stop. Jeffco deputy Dylan Heck located the vehicle as it turned onto State Route 19, and, upon seeing the deputy, the suspect immediately accelerated, passing vehicles and reaching speeds over 100 mph in a posted 50 mph zone before pulling over and stopping near Larson Lake Road. A vehicle search revealed 41 grams of Fentanyl and 17 grams of Methamphetamine. The suspect, a 33-year-old Bremerton man, was booked into the Jefferson County Jail.

Installation of the equipment and tiles for a new playground for the Chimacum Elementary School will occur this week with a ribbon-cutting scheduled soon. The school district has rented equipment for staff to remove the old surface and complete the groundwork to save money. The old concrete-and-pea-gravel surfaces will be replaced with 2-foot by 2-foot interlocking pieces of rubberized tile that will reduce the risk of injury from falls. And, if damaged, they can simply be popped out and replaced.

After meeting with staff, parents and students, the designers with Northwest Playground Equipment elected to include a rope net, tether ball, climbing nets, a saucer-shaped unity rocker, and an 8-foot-wide slide in the new playground. The new 4,000-square-foot outdoor area will cover the footprint of two older, outdated playgrounds, and will eliminate wood equipment that can produce splinters, metal equipment that gets hot when the sun's out, and hard concrete surfaces that have no cushion when kids fall, while at the same time maximizing activity, minimizing risk, and ensuring ease of maintenance and longevity.

And finally, chip sealing will begin later this month, and road crews have begun doing pavement repair, drainage cleaning, tree trimming, and brush cutting. The main work should take place Tuesdays through Thursdays from 6am to 4:30pm, and sweeping – to remove loose rock and prepare for fog sealing – will be done on Mondays and Fridays as roads are ready. To learn which roads in the county will be affected, visit <https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/920/Chip-Seal-Program>.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.